



## NEWS RELEASE



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SOUTHEAST INFORMATION OFFICE: Atlanta, Ga.

Technical information: (404) 893-4222 • BLSInfoAtlanta@bls.gov • [www.bls.gov/regions/southeast](http://www.bls.gov/regions/southeast)

Media contact: (404) 893-4220

### Occupational Employment and Wages in Columbia, May 2013

Workers in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$19.41 in May 2013, 13 percent below the nationwide average of \$22.33, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 20 of the 22 major occupational groups, including construction and extraction, business and financial operations, and computer and mathematical.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including office and administrative support, protective service, and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, 10 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including construction and extraction, food preparation and serving related, and transportation and material moving. (See [table A](#) and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—office and administrative support—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Columbia had 63,320 jobs in office and administrative support, accounting for 18.3 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 16.2-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$15.67, measurably below the national wage of \$16.78.

With employment of 11,290, customer service representatives was among the largest occupations within the office and administrative support group, followed by secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive (7,310) and general office clerks (6,960). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants, with mean hourly wages of \$23.00 and \$22.14, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks (\$8.81) and stock clerks and order fillers (\$10.75). (Detailed occupational data for office and administrative support are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_17900.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_17900.htm).)

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Columbia	United States	Columbia	Percent difference <sup>1</sup>
Total, all occupations .....	100.0%	100.0%	\$22.33	\$19.41*	-13
Management .....	4.9	4.6*	53.15	45.13*	-15
Business and financial operations.....	5.0	5.0	34.14	27.24*	-20
Computer and mathematical .....	2.8	2.6*	39.43	31.45*	-20
Architecture and engineering .....	1.8	1.7	38.51	34.38*	-11
Life, physical, and social science .....	0.9	0.5*	33.37	26.75*	-20
Community and social services.....	1.4	1.6*	21.50	18.99*	-12
Legal .....	0.8	1.1*	47.89	32.79*	-32
Education, training, and library.....	6.3	6.1*	24.76	23.63	-5
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.3	0.9*	26.72	19.66*	-26
Healthcare practitioner and technical.....	5.8	6.5*	35.93	30.53*	-15
Healthcare support.....	3.0	2.9	13.61	12.29*	-10
Protective service.....	2.5	3.3*	20.92	16.10*	-23
Food preparation and serving related .....	9.0	8.3*	10.38	9.21*	-11
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance .....	3.2	2.9*	12.51	11.04*	-12
Personal care and service.....	3.0	2.3*	11.88	10.87*	-9
Sales and related .....	10.6	10.6	18.37	15.38*	-16
Office and administrative support.....	16.2	18.3*	16.78	15.67*	-7
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.3*	11.70	13.28*	14
Construction and extraction .....	3.8	2.9*	21.94	17.42*	-21
Installation, maintenance, and repair .....	3.9	4.3*	21.35	20.04*	-6
Production .....	6.6	7.0	16.79	15.63*	-7
Transportation and material moving.....	6.8	6.3*	16.28	14.77*	-9

<sup>1</sup> A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Columbia is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

\* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See table 1.) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, insurance claims and policy processing clerks were employed at 2.5 times the national rate in Columbia, and procurement clerks, at 2.2 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks had a location quotient of 0.9 in Columbia, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce.

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

### **Technical Note**

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year for a 3-year period. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected in May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. The sample in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,749 establishments with a response rate of 70 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm).

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm) and [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm), respectively.

The May 2013 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/soc](http://www.bls.gov/soc) and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at [www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm).

### **Area definitions**

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Columbia, S.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Richland, and Saluda Counties.

#### **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/regions/southeast](http://www.bls.gov/regions/southeast). Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_ques.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm). Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/methods\\_statement.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/methods_statement.pdf). Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request – Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013**

Occupation <sup>(1)</sup>	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level <sup>(2)</sup>	Location quotient <sup>(3)</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>(4)</sup>
Office and Administrative Support Occupations .....	63,320	1.1	\$15.67	\$32,590
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers .....	5,800	1.6	23.00	47,840
Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service .....	330	1.1	13.48	28,040
Bill and Account Collectors .....	1,240	1.3	14.34	29,820
Billing and Posting Clerks .....	1,470	1.1	15.10	31,410
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks .....	3,680	0.9	16.87	35,100
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks .....	380	0.9	18.71	38,910
Procurement Clerks .....	400	2.2	18.14	37,730
Tellers .....	880	0.6	12.23	25,440
Financial Clerks, All Other .....	30	0.3	22.81	47,440
Brokerage Clerks .....	90	0.6	19.21	39,960
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks .....	220	0.7	16.71	34,750
Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks .....	90	0.7	16.86	35,070
Customer Service Representatives .....	11,290	1.8	14.60	30,380
Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs .....	90	0.3	17.86	37,150
File Clerks .....	300	0.7	12.56	26,130
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks .....	610	1.0	8.81	18,320
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan .....	390	0.8	13.80	28,710
Library Assistants, Clerical .....	310	1.2	11.96	24,880
Loan Interviewers and Clerks .....	330	0.6	15.92	33,120
New Accounts Clerks .....	100	0.7	15.69	32,630
Order Clerks .....	260	0.5	15.69	32,630
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping .....	520	1.5	17.08	35,530
Receptionists and Information Clerks .....	2,460	1.0	12.56	26,120
Information and Record Clerks, All Other .....	340	0.7	19.62	40,810
Cargo and Freight Agents .....	70	0.3	18.87	39,250
Couriers and Messengers .....	320	1.7	10.80	22,470
Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers .....	200	0.8	14.77	30,710
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance .....	420	0.9	20.52	42,680
Meter Readers, Utilities .....	120	1.2	17.64	36,690
Postal Service Clerks .....	110	0.6	24.29	50,520
Postal Service Mail Carriers .....	710	0.9	23.78	49,470
Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators .....	410	1.3	22.56	46,930
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks .....	1,620	2.2	21.68	45,090
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks .....	1,810	1.0	13.38	27,830
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers .....	3,820	0.8	10.75	22,360
Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping .....	170	1.0	12.51	26,020
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants .....	1,480	0.8	22.14	46,060
Legal Secretaries .....	770	1.3	17.26	35,900

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013 - Continued**

Occupation <sup>(1)</sup>	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level <sup>(2)</sup>	Location quotient <sup>(3)</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>(4)</sup>
Medical Secretaries .....	1,200	0.9	14.93	31,050
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive .....	7,310	1.3	15.22	31,660
Computer Operators .....	140	0.8	15.84	32,950
Data Entry Keyers.....	960	1.8	13.21	27,470
Word Processors and Typists .....	40	0.2	17.54	36,490
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks .....	1,540	2.5	15.78	32,820
Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service.....	410	1.6	13.54	28,170
Office Clerks, General .....	6,960	0.9	12.99	27,020
Statistical Assistants .....	130	3.2	16.48	34,280
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other .....	150	0.3	15.96	33,190

<sup>(1)</sup> For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Columbia, SC, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_17900.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_17900.htm).

<sup>(2)</sup> Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

<sup>(3)</sup> The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

<sup>(4)</sup> Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.